MR. CHAIRMAN: Ia it 12 per cent on PPF?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: On PPF, it has been 12 per cent. On Employees Provident Fund that has been asked, 85 per cent is invested in special deposits...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. What is the rate of interest of EPF and PPF?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, on PPF, it is 12 per cent and on EPF, 85 per cent deposits are with the Central Government carrying an interest at 12 per cent and balance 15 per cent with the State Government which carries 11 per cent interest. So, 86 per cent of the EPF does carry interest of 12 per cent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. The point really is: for the beneficiary, the interest for the Employees Provident Fund should not he lower than the interest for the Public Provident Fund.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, I may submit that 85 per cent of the EPF does carry 12 per cent of interest. Tt is o^y 15 ner cent which is invested in the State Governments, that carries 11 pep cent So 85 per cent does carry 12 per cent interest.

SHRI NIRMAL, CHATTERJEE: Sir, your point was absolutely valid to my mind. You said that it should not be less than 12 ner cent. But what the Finance Minister says is that it will be less than 12 per cent, because 85 Per cent does carrv 12 per cent and 15 tier cent less, Would you kindly request him that he changes the situation?

MR. CHAIRMAN: AU right, in so far as it lies in the power of the Chair, it will say that there must be an equitable payment of interest for all people.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: That 11 per cent h on the State Government securities and if hon. Members help on this, then, perhaps something can be done. (Interruptions) On 85 per cent on the Central Government securities, it is 12 per cent.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Even then they have to deduct at cost _____

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SLNGH: I have answered it fully.

MR, CHAIRMAN: He will look into it. Please see that the employees provident fund interest is not less than the public provident fund.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, we need cooperation from the State Governments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next Question No. 165.

Indian nationals languishing in Pakistani jails

♦SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:!
SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Indian nationals at present languishing in Pakistani jai's and since when they axe under detention;

(b) how many of them are (i) defence personnel; (ii) valid passport holders; amd (iii) others;

(c) whether our embassy officials have been allowed to meet them; if so, with what results; and

(d) what steps Government have taken *m* the recent past for the re lease of these people and what fur ther steps Government propose t(take in the matter?

tThe question was actually asked o the floor of the House by Shri Lal F Advani

THE MINISTEB OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the House. ^

Statement

(a) About 942 Indian prisoners with detention periods varying from few weeks to 14 years are in Pakistan jail.

(to) Out of the 942 prisoners, 43 are missing defence personnel. Many of the prisoners are without passports but 76 prisoners have intimated th<- details of their lost passports.

(c) On 20-4-1986, Consular Access was provided in Multan Jail to Indian Embassy officials in Islamabad in respect of 124 Indian prisoners. Earlier 63 prisoners were repatriated to India on 20.2.1986.

(d) In addition to the constant efforts at the diplomatic levels both at New Delhi and Islamabad, this matter has been taken up at the meeting of th$_0$ Foreign Secretaries (January, 1986) and the Meeting of the Sub-Commission—IV of the Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission (February, 1986). This was even discussed in a meeting between the Prime Minister and Gen. Zia in New Delhi in December, 1985. Constant efforts are made to repatriate all Indian prisoners from Pakistan. The Pakistan Government has been requested to release all Indian detainees particularly those who have completed their sentences.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has informed the House that out of the 942 prisoners, 43 are missing defence personnel. My first question relates to the defence personnel. How many of these have been languishing in Pakistan prisons since the 1971 war? Because if there are any, the Government *owes* an explanation to the country. How has this happened? Because that was a war in which we bad mora than 90,000 Pak soldiers taken as prisoners. How is it that w» released all of them without ensuring that every single person of our defence personnel is released? In the same context of defence personnel, I would like to ask another question. When you say that Consular Access was provided in Multan Jail to Indian Embassy officials in Islamabad in respect of 124 Indian prisoners, does this figure of 124 include these 4S defence personnel?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: While we have been giving this figure of 43 defence personnel, it is true that these defence personnel were involved on our behalf on West Pakistan front at the time of 1971 conflict. The fact is that at that time we were not aware about the whereabouts of these people. But subsequently through the relations and other sources we found out that these personnel were in Pakistan.

Now, Sir, on the point whether Pakistan has failed to release these personnel, the fact is that the Pakistan Government is denying that these personnel are in jail. Now, from outs information they are there. We have asked for Consular Access, but the people who are produced before our Consular officers did not include these personnel. Now, we have asked the Pakistan authorities to check with their jail records and we have also asked them to permit the relatives of these defence personnel to go there, particularly, to Multan jail where most of the Indian personnel and the detainees are to be found $_a$nd to other jails where they can also help to identify these personnel.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI; Sir, you will appreciate that the answer which is given just now has completely changed the perspective of the earlier answer that has been given. I had presumed these 942 Indian prisoners with detention periods varying from a few weeks to 14 years were admittedly in Pakistan jail. This is a categorical statement on the basis of the information the Government of India has

had. Now, I am told that so far as 43 missing defence personnel are concerned, the Pakistan Government does not even admit that they are in their jail. This is a totally different picture. I know that at least on three occasions there have been talks on this issue at as high a level as the Prime Ministers' and Foi[r]4gn Secretaries'. And so when this answer was given, I thought this is a position confirmed by both sides. Now I am told that so far as these 43 defence personnel are concerned Pakistan still denies it May be «ven about these 942 persons, it still denies, t do not know. How many names have you got of these 942 prisoners? Have their families in India been informed that these are the persons held in prison, in detention by Pakistan? Also, at the end of the statement it is said:

> "The Pakistan Government has been requested to release all Indian detainees particularly those who have completed their sentences."

So obviously even those who have completed their sentences have not been released. How is this? In the month of January, there was a meeting at the level of Foreign Secretaries. Mr. Romesh Bhandari, our Foreign .Secretary, and Mr. Niaz Naik, Pakistan Foreign Secretary, met and they «nnounced in a joint statement that by the 31st of March, all civil detainees who had completed their terms would be released. What has happened in pursuance of that declaration?

SHRT EDUARDO FALEIRO: Sir, as the hon. Member has pointed out, it is not only the defence personnel whose existence is not accepted by the Pakistan Government. Even in regard to the 942 people who, according to ou[r] information, are in Pakistan jails. they do not accept tho total fipure. The tota] number accepted by them is 344. Thev hav> riven us 344 names on the 20th August, 1985. However, Sir. there are discrepencies that we can see.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI; Any defence personnel in these 344?

SHRl EDUARDO FALEIRO; No. This figure of 344 does not include defence personnel because Pakistan does not admit that a single defence personnel is there; 344 is the total figure. The figure of 942 is the figure that we have given on the basis of information from the relatives, on the basis of what our mission has been able to find out and on the basis of reports in the Pakistan press itself. So the're is this discrepancy. However, I may add here that without admitting the exact number, the Pakistani authorities have given us to understand that they are checking on their records. They have accepted our demand and our request that they should check on their own jail records in all their jails to find out one by one who are the Indian nationals detained there.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has said that these personnel were charged and the sentences of some of them are over. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what kind of charges were placed on these personnel, whether civilian or defence, whether he has additional information on that and whether any protests have been lodged with the Pakistan Government.

SHRT EDUARDO FALEIRO; Usually the charges are that the people who are detained in Pakistan jails were there either without passports or without valid visas.

SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT; Sir, in the second week *oi* this month, Pakistan voluntarily released some Indian prisoners and pushed them to our side at the Gangana?ar border. One of them was Subash Chand from Jammu who was doing the work of this country when the Pakistanis arrested him and tried him on charges of spying. He was sentenced for seven years and even after seven years, he was kept in prison and he suffered imprisonment for 14 years. Now he has been arrested by Rajasthan police and detained in

Ganga-nagar, on what charge, T do not know. He has suffered mental and physical torture is Pakistan and now h» is in the jail of Ganganagar. Will the hon. Minister intervene?

SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA: The same thing happened on the Gujarat border. Some detainees were released on the border. We do not know what happened to them.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: This is a suggestion for action—whether we would intervene in the matter. I would definitely look into the specific case. I do not have the information now. But I wiH write to the hon. Member.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY; Mr. Chairman, Sir, letters received by members of the families from the prisoners in Pakistan jails reveal that the conditions in Pakistan jails are very inhuman. What action has the Govemment taken in this regard to redress their grievances?

SHBI EDUARDO FALEIRO; I would not like them to experience at any time the conditions in Pakistan jails. We want them to be released. We have been working in this direction.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Sir, 942 persons are in Pakistant jails. That shows the total failure of our diplomacy. 1 would like to ask about the 43 missing defence personnel. Sir, time and again when you have been in the Chair, they promised us that they would look into the matter. Nothin? has been done. I want to know[1] if there is any Pakistan defence personnel in Indian jails and whether we are ready for exchange of the peoole...

SHRT EDUARDO[5]FALEIRO: There are no Pakistani defence personnel in our jails and it is not correct that there has been an$_{y}$ failure of our diplomacy. On the contrary, our diplomacy has uroved to be very successful in getting the people released...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour over. After the Question Hour is over, even the Minister cannot continue.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Computerisation in banks

•166. SHRI KAPIL VERMA;
SHRI KALPNATH RAI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased *o state;

(a) whether computerisation is being gradually introduced in different operations in banks;

(b) if so, whether a fear is being expressed by the employees of banks that they will be gradually replaced by computers and they wiH become unemployed;

(c) whether the whole matter has been examined; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to safeguard the interests af the bank employees?

THE MTNISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI); (a) to (d) Public Sector Banks have a programme Of introduction of computers and machines in their offices and branches in a phased manner. The objective ol computerisation in the Indian context, are to improve customer service and to speedily balance books and reconcile inter-branches accounts so as to prevent frauds. The programme of computerisation has been so designed as to ensure that there is no retrenchment of staff, and bank employees have been given a firm commitment in this regard. The fear expressed by some bank employees that they wiH become unemployed is totally misplaced.

Rise in wholesale price index

•167 SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the wholesale price index has risen by 1-8 per cent during the first six weeks 0* the current financial year; -